

2008

WISCONSIN Winnebago System Sturgeon Spearing Regulations & Information

Wisconsin Department of
Natural Resources
Bureau of Fisheries Management



*In memory of
Pete Jurgenson.
A founding member of the
Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon
Advisory Committee.*

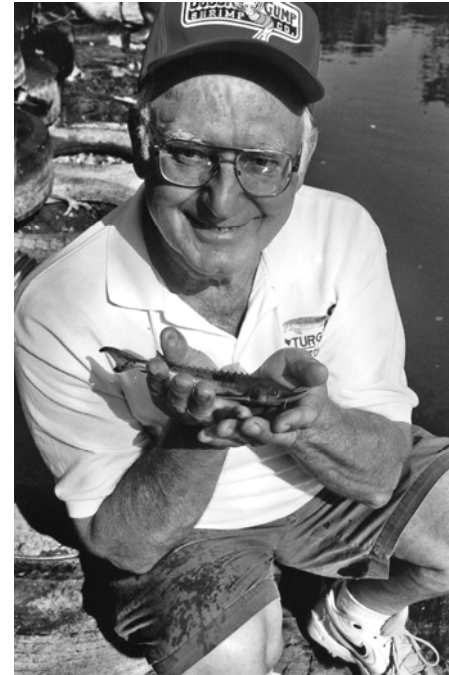
Dear Winnebago Sturgeon Spearer,

As we look forward to the 2008 sturgeon spearing season we should also look back to remember the people that helped get us to where we are today with our successful sturgeon management program. We are very fortunate to be the benefactors of decades of work by many individuals including Dan Folz and many other DNR Staff who laid the foundation for our current program. We are also fortunate to be on the receiving end of the many hours and dedication of the Sturgeon for Tomorrow Directors who have raised nearly three quarters of a million dollars over the last thirty years for sturgeon management and protection on the Winnebago System. Finally we also need to recognize the hard work of the members of the Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee who, since 1992, have put countless hours into helping shape the Winnebago System Sturgeon Program into the world recognized success story that it is today.

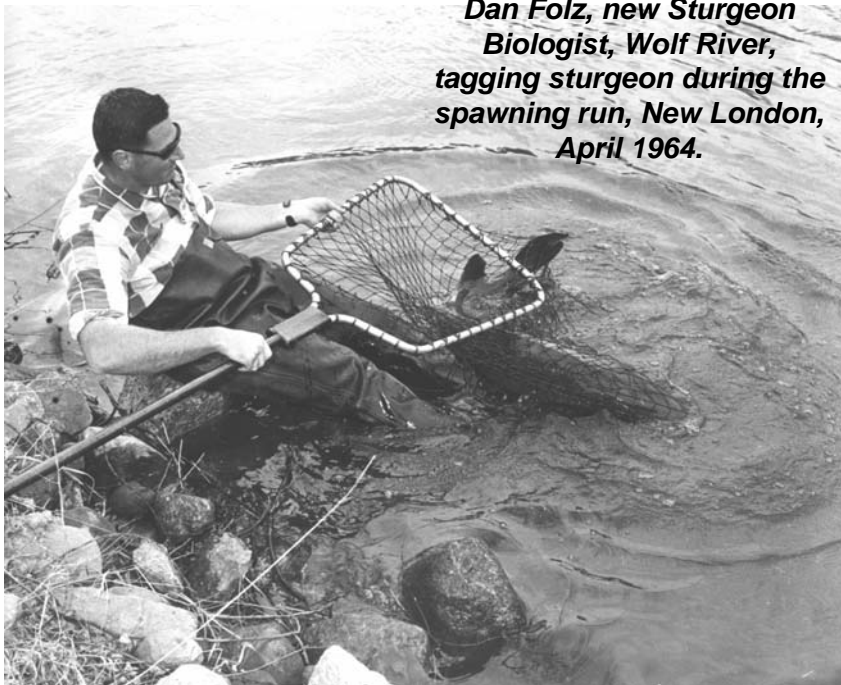
Looking forward to the 2008 season,

Ron Bruch

Winnebago Sturgeon Biologist



Bill Casper, One of the founders and first president of Sturgeon for Tomorrow; and a current member of the Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee.



Dan Folz, new Sturgeon Biologist, Wolf River, tagging sturgeon during the spawning run, New London, April 1964.

***Sturgeon Hotline
920-303-5444***

For information on the sturgeon spearing season, the Winnebago Sturgeon History Project, or on the Sturgeon Guard Program

Winnebago System Sturgeon Spearing Regulations and Information

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*Removing a fin bone for ageing from a fish
captured in a winter survey net on Lake
Poygan, January 13, 1960*



*Lake Sturgeon fin bone
cross section*

*36 inches, 11 pounds,
estimated to be 8 years
old. Harvested
February 1954 from
Lake Winnebago*

WINNEBAGO SYSTEM STURGEON SPEARING REGULATIONS

Please take a few minutes to carefully read through this regulation pamphlet.

2008 OPEN SEASON – Winnebago System Sturgeon Spearing

Lake Winnebago

February 9, 2008 through February 24, 2008 on Lake Winnebago **or until the pre-set harvest cap for Lake Winnebago is reached, OR the pre-set Winnebago System-wide harvest cap is reached, whichever comes first** (as per trigger closure rules).

Upriver Lakes

February 9, 2008 through February 24, 2008 on the Upriver Lakes (Lakes Butte des Morts, Winneconne and Poygan) **or until the pre-set harvest cap for the Upriver Lakes is reached, OR the pre-set Winnebago System-wide harvest cap is reached, whichever comes first** (as per trigger closure rules).

An annual lottery sturgeon spear fishery began on the Upriver Lakes in 2007. Spearers need to apply for an Upriver Lakes sturgeon lottery tag by August 1 and are notified by October 1 if they were successful in receiving authorization to purchase an Upriver Lakes sturgeon spearing license. Group lottery applications of up to four persons are accepted. Group applications must be submitted on-line at <https://www4.wildlifelicense.com/wi/start.php>. Spearers that applied for but not authorized to purchase an Upriver Lakes license receive a preference point, and can still purchase a license for Lake Winnebago, but must do so by the October 31 license sales deadline. Sales for both Lake Winnebago and Upriver Lakes sturgeon spearing licenses end October 31. The Upriver Lakes sturgeon lottery fishery limited participation to 500 tags in 2008 (numbers of tags in future seasons may vary) and will have a small sub-allocation of the overall sturgeon harvest cap (see below).

Total harvest of sturgeon will be limited through pre-set harvest caps. Harvest caps for the 2008 Winnebago System spearing season are 556 for adult females, 556 for juvenile females and 1000 for males. Portions of the system-wide harvest caps have been allocated to the fisheries on Lake Winnebago and

the Upriver Lakes:

	Juvenile Females	Adult Females	Males
Lake Winnebago	445	500	800
Upriver Lakes	<u>111</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>200</u>
System-Wide	556	556	1000

The Department will close the sturgeon spearing season on Lake Winnebago when the first of one of the two following conditions occurs:

- *At the end of the fishing day in which 100% of any one of the three Lake Winnebago harvest caps is reached or exceeded, or*
- *24 hours from the end of the fishing day within which a harvest of 90% to 99% of any one of the three Lake Winnebago harvest caps is reached.*

The Department will close the sturgeon spearing season on the Upriver Lakes when the first of one of the two following conditions occurs:

- *At the end of the fishing day in which 100% of any one of the three Upriver Lakes harvest caps is reached or exceeded, or*
- *24 hours from the end of the fishing day within which a harvest of 90% to 99% of any one of the three Upriver Lakes harvest caps is reached.*

The Department will close the sturgeon spearing season on all waters of the Winnebago System when the first of one of the two following conditions occurs:

- *At the end of the fishing day in which 100% of any one of the three Winnebago System-wide harvest caps is reached or exceeded, or*
- *24 hours from the end of the fishing day within which a harvest of 90% to 99% of any one of the three Winnebago System-wide harvest caps is reached.*

BAG LIMIT: One lake sturgeon per licensee

MINIMUM LENGTH LIMIT: 36 inches

LICENSE REQUIREMENT

To spear sturgeon, residents must purchase a sturgeon spearing license and tag for \$20.00 and nonresidents must purchase a sturgeon spearing license and tag for \$65.00

Only persons 14 years of age and older are eligible to spear sturgeon.

No sturgeon spearing license may be issued or purchased after October 31, 2007 except for Wisconsin residents that turn 14 between November 1, 2007 and the last day of the 2008 spearing season, and for Wisconsin residents serving in the Armed Forces home on leave during the 2008 spearing season.

The sturgeon spearing license and tag must be carried by the licensee at all times while fishing for sturgeon with a spear.

A sturgeon spearing license and tag is nontransferable. No person may possess the tag or license of another.

No person may possess a validated sturgeon carcass tag unless attached to a legal sturgeon.

SPEARING HOURS

6:30 AM to 12:30 PM. No artificial lights of any kind can be utilized while spearing.

POSSESSION AND USE OF A SPEAR

No person may have under his or her control any spear or similar device in any enclosure on the ice or waters of the Winnebago Pool Lakes except when authorized during established sturgeon spearing seasons.

No person may take, capture, kill or attempt to kill sturgeon on the Winnebago Pool Lakes by any means other than spearing with a spear thrown by hand from inside a fishing shelter placed on the ice during the open spearing season.

ICE HOLE RESTRICTIONS

No person may cut, use, or maintain an ice hole larger than 12 inches in diameter or square for the taking of fish in any manner through the ice except spearing sturgeon on the Winnebago Pool Lakes during the open season. The total area of a sturgeon spearing hole or combination of holes in an individual spearing shelter may not exceed a total of 48 square feet.

Ice holes larger than 12 inches cut, used, or maintained may not be covered by a shelter, shanty, or similar device, except during the period from 48 hours before and continuing through the open season for sturgeon spearing season.

ICE HOLE MARKING

Sturgeon spearing ice holes must be marked with at least 2 strips of wood that extend at least 3 feet above the ice. The wood strips must not exceed 1.5 inches in width and .25 inches in thickness (wood lathe meets the requirement).

When you first set your shanty, cut a hole and freeze the lathe into the ice for better marking of sturgeon holes. Lathe markers stuck in snow banks are not adequate because of snow melt during warm weather conditions.

SPEARING OF ROUGH FISH

Spearing of rough fish from the Winnebago Pool Lakes is prohibited during the sturgeon spearing season.

TAGGING REQUIREMENT

A spearer with an unused and valid sturgeon license and tag who spears a lake sturgeon must **immediately** validate and attach their carcass tag to the sturgeon (just forward of the tail). Any sturgeon speared must be registered the same day it was speared by 1:30 PM.

It is illegal for any person to possess any sturgeon or part thereof without the carcass tag validated and attached.

Group bagging is illegal and occurs whenever the person who tags the sturgeon is different from the person who speared the sturgeon.

TRANSPORTATION

It is unlawful for any person to transport any unregistered sturgeon in or on any motor driven vehicle unless the sturgeon is carried openly exposed and placed so the carcass tag cannot be handled by anyone. *"Openly exposed" means open to view by a person in a passing vehicle.*

To transport a legally harvested and tagged sturgeon the fish must be accompanied by the spearer until registered

It is illegal to possess an unregistered sturgeon speared from Lake Winnebago outside the highway boundary area delineated as follows: *From the intersection of highways 10 and 114 in Menasha, east on highway 114 to highway 55; south on highway 55 to U.S. highway 151; south on U.S. highway 151 to Scott street in Fond du Lac; west on Scott street to highway 45; north on highway 45 to Main street in Oshkosh; north on Main street to*

Waugoo avenue; east on Waugoo avenue to Bowen street; north on Bowen street to North Shore drive; north on North Shore drive to county highway A; north on county highway A to highway 114 in Neenah; east on highway 114 to the intersection of highways 10 and 114 in Menasha.

It is illegal to possess an unregistered sturgeon speared from Lakes Butte des Mort, Winneconne or Poygan outside the highway boundary area delineated as follows: From the intersection of highways 41 and 21 in Oshkosh west on highway 21 to highway 116; north on highway 116 to county highway B; west on county highway B to county highway D; west on county highway D to highway 49; north on highway 49 to county highway H; east on county highway H to highway 10; east on highway 10 to county highway II; south on county highway II to county highway M; south on county highway M to highway 116; east on highway 116 to highway 45; south on highway 45 to highway 41; south on highway 41 to highway 21.

REGISTRATION

A person who spears a sturgeon must accompany and exhibit the tagged sturgeon at an official sturgeon registration station (see map page 6) no later than 1:30 p.m. on the day speared. **To avoid the "end of the day" rush please bring your fish in as soon as possible after spearing it.**

Any fish harvested from Lake Winnebago must be registered at one of the sturgeon registration stations on Lake Winnebago. Any fish harvested from Lakes Butte des Mort, Winneconne or Poygan (the Upriver Lakes) must be registered at one of the sturgeon registration stations on the Upriver Lakes.

Department Fisheries staff at the registration stations will collect biological information on the size, sex and age of your fish, and will attach a metal sturgeon registration tag.

The sturgeon carcass and registration tag must be retained until the carcass is consumed.

STURGEON REGISTRATION STATIONS

Operated daily throughout the season by DNR Fisheries staff (Some stations may be closed before the end of the season depending upon spearing activity and volume of sturgeon registrations. Any necessary early closures will be posted at registration stations)

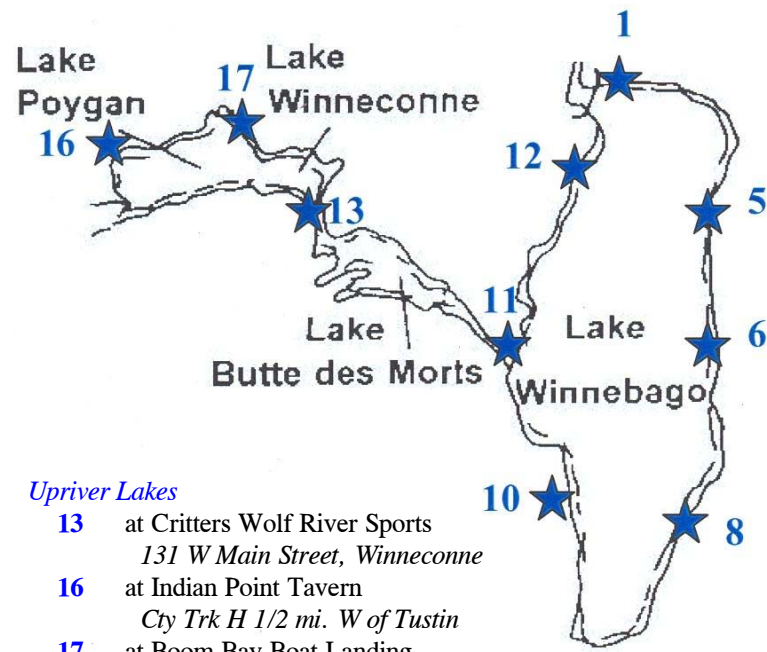
Winnebago Pool Lakes Sturgeon Registration Stations:

Station No. Station Location

Lake Winnebago

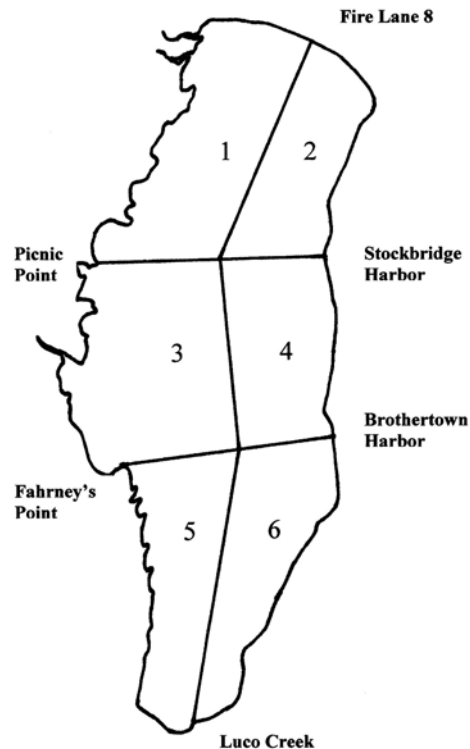
- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | at Waverly Beach Resort
Junction of U.S. Hwys 10 & 114 |
| 5 | at Harbor Bar
Stockbridge on the lake |
| 6 | at the Quinney Quencher
Quinney on the lake |
| 8 | at the DNR Calumet Harbor Station
Pipe on the lake |
| 10 | at Wendt's Bar & Harbor
Hwy 45, 8 mi. N of Fond du Lac |
| 11 | at Jerry's Tavern
1210 Ceape St., Oshkosh |
| 12 | at Payne's Point Tavern
Cty Trk A 3 mi. S of Neenah |

Note - Some station numbers are missing, (i.e.: 2, 3, 4, etc) due to changes in the number and location of stations over the years.



Upriver Lakes

- | | |
|----|---|
| 13 | at Critters Wolf River Sports
131 W Main Street, Winneconne |
| 16 | at Indian Point Tavern
Cty Trk H 1/2 mi. W of Tustin |
| 17 | at Boom Bay Boat Landing
Cty Trk MM on Boom Bay, Lake Poygan |



LITTER

It is illegal to place or deposit any materials (including biodegradable) on the lake bed. Any material used in a sturgeon spearing hole must be removed by the sturgeon spearer when the hole is abandoned, or if requested by a warden.

Any material that is left on or frozen in the ice or waters is the responsibility of the person who left the material (including tar paper, wood, cardboard used adjacent to shanties).

FISHING EQUIPMENT OR GEAR

It is unlawful to possess a fishing pole, hook and line, angling equipment or other similar devices that could be used to catch fish in an ice fishing tent, shanty, or other ice fishing enclosure with ice holes larger than 12 inches in

diameter or square.

ICE SHANTIES AND SHELTERS

The door of any occupied shanty/shelter shall be such that the door can be readily opened from the outside.

All shanties/shelters must have the name and residential address of the person owning or using the shanty. The name and address must be painted or permanently affixed on the outside with a minimum of 1" lettering.

All shanties/shelters must be removed from the ice on or before March 5 south of Highway 64.

Lake Sturgeon of the Winnebago System

The Winnebago System likely holds the largest natural sustaining lake sturgeon population in the world, and is used as an egg source for lake sturgeon re-introduction and rehabilitation projects throughout the fish's original North American range. Lake sturgeon are slow growing, long lived and late maturing fish. Both males and females will attain legal size in the spear fishery (36 inches) in 9 to 10 years. Males and females generally grow at similar rates up to about 40", after which females grow faster. Females typically live longer and therefore attain much larger sizes, making up most of the population of fish over 60 inches. Females

have the potential to live over 100 years and males have the potential to live over 80 years. Fifty percent of the females are mature at age 27 (55") with 100% of the females mature at age 39 (63"). Fifty percent of the males are mature at age 19 (47"), with 100% mature at age 30 (50").



“How old really are the sturgeon in Winnebago?”

This has been a question fisheries biologists have been attempting to get a handle on for decades. Knowing the age of the sturgeon harvested and in the spawning population is extremely important information. Fisheries biologists use age data to estimate a number of key population characteristics including mortality and survival rates, growth rates, and age of maturity.

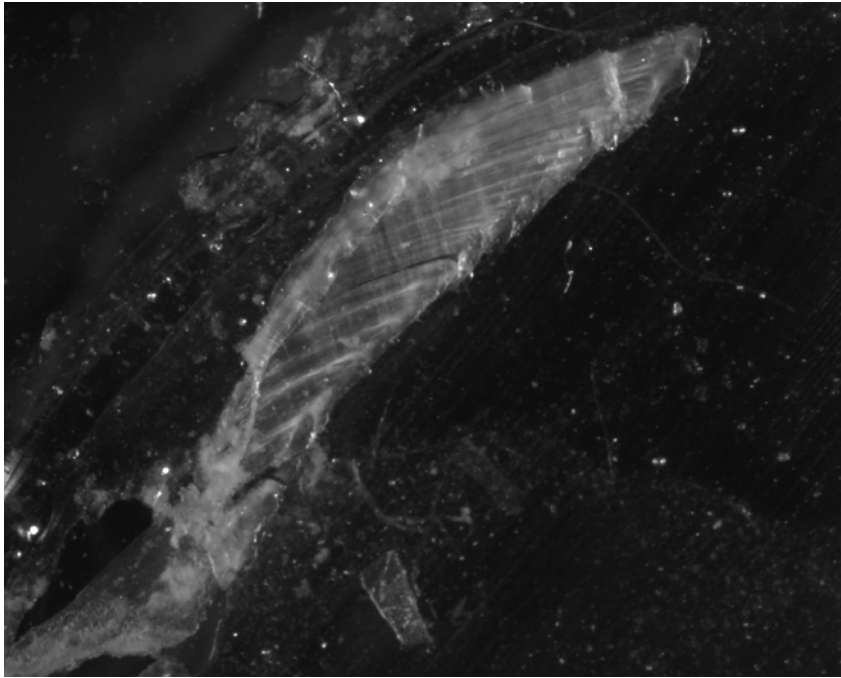
For the last 60 years biologists working on the Winnebago sturgeon population have used the leading fin ray of the pectoral fin to estimate the age of sturgeon. Cross sections of this fin ray show growth rings that sturgeon biologists around the world for nearly the last century thought represented the annual growth marks of sturgeon.

Work we have conducted over the last several years with lake sturgeon ear bones (otoliths) has shown that the growth rings on the pectoral spines are representative of the true age of sturgeon, ***BUT only for fish less than 13 years of age***. We found that growth rings on spine sections of older fish generally underestimate the true age of the fish. Fish we had been calling 25 years old are closer to 30 years of age, and fish we had been calling 45 are closer to 55 years old. We also found that while the fin bones underestimate the true age, the ear bones actually tell the true story about the fish's age.

So – the bottom line is – our Winnebago lake sturgeon are older than we thought they were. We will continue to collect some fin bones though, especially from tagged fish, and if we can also get the ear bones from the same fish, so we can continue to improve our understanding of the error between fin bones and ear bones. We appreciate your cooperation in letting us sample the fin and ear bones of your fish.

Lake Sturgeon Length at Age

Total Length (in)	Male Estimated Age (yrs)	Female Estimated Age (yrs)
36	9	9
38	10	10
40	12	12
42	14	13
44	15	15
46	17	17
48	20	19
50	22	21
52	24	23
54	27	26
56	30	29
58	33	31
60	36	34
62	40	37
64	43	41
66	47	44
68	51	48
70	55	51
72	60	55
74		60
76		64
78		69
80		73
82		78
84		83



Lake sturgeon ear bone cross section showing true growth rings

Summary of 2007 Lake Winnebago Sturgeon Spear Harvest Season

The 2007 sturgeon spearing season on the Winnebago pool lakes that began on Saturday February 10 went into the books as a very nice season, both from the sturgeon population's perspective and from the spearers' perspective. The harvest was kept at a safe level - we manage the fishery to keep the harvest at or below 5% of the total estimated harvestable stock each year. From the spearers' standpoint, the season was successful as well. The Upriver Lakes lottery fishery lasted 6 days with 65% success rate in a very high quality fishery - this was the longest Upriver Lakes fishery since 1956.

The Lake Winnebago fishery lasted for a full season - 16 days in which spearers had lots of time, including three full weekends, to fish, and local establishments also had 16+ days of patronage from spearers and sturgeon enthusiasts.

A total of 8533 sturgeon spearing licenses were sold: 8048 for Lake Winnebago (7915 resident and 133 non-resident), and 485 for the Upriver Lakes (482 resident and 3 non-resident). Out of the 2795 persons who applied for an Upriver Lakes lottery license, 500 were authorized to purchase a license and 485 elected to purchase their license. Shanty Counts on the Upriver Lakes peaked opening weekend at 431 (adjusted for non-spearing shanties) while peaking on Lake Winnebago the second weekend at 4633 (opening day shanty count on Lake Winnebago was 3481) with an adjusted count of 4411 (subtracting non-spearing shanties counted pre-season).

Ice conditions were good for the entire spearing season both on Lake Winnebago and on the Upriver Lakes. The extreme cold weather that set in for 2 weeks prior to opening day made good ice up to 22" on most of the lake system. Water clarity while not perfect, was good, with spearers able to see down 10-11 feet in the south end of Lake Winnebago and down 16 feet in the north, and nearly to the bottom in much of the Upriver Lakes, remaining fairly consistent for the full season.

Total system-wide harvest was 1347 sturgeon.

	Juvenile Females	Adult Females	Males	Total
Lk Winnebago FINAL	188	436	410	1034
Upriver Lakes FINAL	72	51	190	313
System-wide Harvest Cap	556	556	1000	
System-wide Harvest	260	487	600	1347

Sex ratios of the harvest were similar to those seen over the last few seasons in both Lake Winnebago and the Upriver Lakes. Nearly 2 out of 3 fish in Lake Winnebago in the winter are females, while nearly 2 out of 3 fish in the Upriver Lakes are typically males due to the pre-spawn migration of adults out of Lake Winnebago in the fall. Annually, most of the adult spawners [currently approximately 2700 (or 25%) of the females and 12000 (or 60%) of the adult males] move out of Lake Winnebago in the fall to stage for the winter in the Wolf and upper Fox Rivers and in the Upriver Lakes before they make their final move to their Spring spawning grounds. With these fish out of Lake Winnebago in the winter, the fish remaining in the lake are mostly females (non spawning adult females and juveniles) and the adult

males that are not spawning that year. On the other hand, the sex ratio of the sturgeon harvested from the Upriver Lakes is generally 2/3 males since the males dominate the pre-spawn staging migrants from Lake Winnebago, some of which stage in the Upriver Lakes until mid March before they move into the rivers to wait until spawning time in late April. Adult female sturgeon spawn once every 3 to 5 years and males generally spawn every other year, although up to half of the adult males may spawn annually if they are in good condition.

Spearers harvested a good number of trophy size sturgeon over 100 pounds in 2007 - 20 in all from Lake Winnebago and 4 from the Upriver Lakes, with the largest being the 158 lb, 74 inch fish taken by Bill Nelson of Larsen. This is the highest proportion of trophy fish in the harvest since the late 1950's-early 1960's. At this point it appears that the proportion of trophy sized sturgeon in the population has increased over the last 10-15 years, following a series of new regulations we implemented designed to increase the number of large fish in the population to stabilize the female spawning stock. This is a trend that we hope to see continuing.

So - all in all - a very nice season we can all feel very good about. Thanks go out to all the spearers who so strongly support the sturgeon program and cooperated so well with our data collection; thanks also go out to all the DNR staff, college students and other volunteers who manned the registration stations through the course of the 16 day season to collect the data that are so vital to the management program.



2007 sturgeon spearing season statistics:

Sturgeon spear harvest by sex and registration station, Lake Winnebago and the Upriver Lakes, 2007.

		Juvenile Female	Adult Female	Male	Totals
Waverly		22	47	48	117
Stockbridge		36	86	75	197
Quinney		19	43	37	99
Cal Har / Jim & Linda's		44	113	96	253
Wendts		47	104	115	266
Jerry's		8	29	24	61
Payne's Point		15	14	18	47
Winneconne		9	2	13	24
County Landing - Poygan		23	21	73	117
Indian Point		25	14	60	99
Boom Bay		12	14	41	67
	Totals	260	487	600	1347

Table 3. Shanty counts, 2007 Lake Winnebago Sturgeon Spearing Season.

	Sat 10 Feb	Sun 11 Feb	Sat 17 Feb	Fri 23 Feb
Area 1	537	543	482	306
Area 2	735	540	676	618
Area 3	325	278	541	426
Area 4	643	697	764	493
Area 5	642	691	1046	518
Area 6	599	674	1124	456
Butte des Morts	26	18	--	--
Winneconne	46	28	--	--
Poygan	465	397	--	--
Total	4018	3866	4633	2817

Average total length and weight of registered sturgeon, 2007 spear harvest, Winnebago System.

		No.	Ave. Len. (in)	Ave. Wgt. (lbs)
Juvenile Female (<55")		260	48.2	23.0
Adult Females (55"+)		487	62.9	61.5
Males		600	52.9	33.9

Winnebago System Sturgeon Harvest – Residency of Successful Spearers, 2007.

County	No. Taken	% of all Taken
Fond du Lac	356	26.4
Winnebago	303	22.5
Calumet	212	15.7
Outagamie	152	11.3
Waupaca	56	4.2
Green Lake	41	3.0
Brown	28	2.1
Manitowoc	25	1.9
Sheboygan	25	1.9
Waushara	20	1.5
Dodge	19	1.4
Other WI Co.'s	91	6.8
Out of State	11	0.8

Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee

Spearers are actively involved in management of the Winnebago System sturgeon population and fishery through the Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee.

Members of the Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee

Organization

Brickyard Fishermen's Club

Representative(s)

Jim Propson
Hilbert, WI
Bruce Fischer
Hilbert, WI

Brothertown Fishing Club

C.A.R.E

East Shore Conservation Club

Fisherman's Road Fishing Club

Lake Park Fishing Club

Lower Cliff Fishing Club

Montgomery Beach Sportsmans Club

Mt. Calvary

Otter Street Fishing Club

Payne's Point Hook & Spear Club, Inc.

Poygan Sportsmens Club

Quinney Fishing Club

Riverside Hunting & Fishing Club

Shadows on the Wolf

Don Lisowe
Chilton, WI

Dan Groeschel
Fond du Lac, WI

Andy Seibel
Mt. Calvary, WI

Dick Mengel
Fond du Lac, WI

Bob Doecker
Appleton, WI

Don Mielke
Menasha, WI

Harry Kachur
Menasha, WI

Willard Jenkins
Malone, WI

Bill McAloon
Oshkosh, WI

John Jurgenson
Neenah, WI

Dan Rudebeck
Larsen, WI
Scott Henning
Larsen, WI

Richard Scheffler
Chilton, WI
Butch Schneider
Chilton, WI

Jeff Birschbach
Mt. Calvary, WI

Bill Marcks
Appleton, WI

Stockbridge Fishing Club	Jerry Ortlieb <i>Stockbridge, WI</i> Bob Parsons <i>Stockbridge, WI</i>
Sturgeon for Tomorrow Main Chapter	Bill Casper <i>Fond du Lac, WI</i> Dave Vogds <i>Fond du Lac, WI</i>
Sturgeon for Tomorrow Northern Half Chapter	Wayne Hoelzel <i>Menasha, WI</i>
Sturgeon for Tomorrow Southwest Chapter	Gary Ninneman <i>N Fond du Lac, WI</i>
Sturgeon for Tomorrow West Central Chapter	Dick and Pat Braasch <i>Oshkosh, WI</i>
Sturgeon for Tomorrow Upper Lakes Chapter	Matt Woods <i>Winneconne, WI</i>
Twin City Rod & Gun Club	Dick Koerner <i>Neenah, WI</i>
Upper Lakes Fishing Club	Bob Pechman <i>Oshkosh, WI</i>
West Shore Fishing Club	Stuart Muche <i>Van Dyne, WI</i> Ron Goldapske <i>Van Dyne, WI</i>
WinnebagoLand Conservation Alliance	Sherman Jacobson <i>Van Dyne, WI</i> Mike Arrowood <i>Oakfield, WI</i>

Sturgeon Guard Volunteers Needed In Spring

Each Spring hundreds of volunteers have an opportunity to guard sturgeon at

their spawning sites on the Wolf River and protect the fish from poaching. When the sturgeon are spawning along the rocky shorelines of the Wolf they are fairly oblivious to nearby human activity and are very susceptible to illegal harvest. The volunteers of the "Sturgeon Patrol" guard the spawning fish 24 hours a day throughout the spawning season which is typically in late April and early May. The program is directed by DNR Law Enforcement staff and funded, in part, by Sturgeon for Tomorrow, a local sturgeon conservation organization.

When spawning begins, pairs of sturgeon guards are assigned to the sites for twelve hour shifts. Prior to assignment, guards check in at "Sturgeon Camp", just north of Shiocton, where they are fed a good meal, given a generous sack lunch and an identification hat (that they keep), and directed to their site. At the end of their shift, guards return to camp for another hearty home cooked meal before they make their way home.

While it is impossible to predict the exact dates that spawning will occur each year, guards are routinely scheduled from April 15th through May 5th. Spawning generally occurs over a five to seven day period within that time window. While we do our best to get all scheduled guards out on the riverbank to see fish, invariably we must cancel some scheduled shifts if the fish are simply not active. We try in those cases to re-schedule guards into an active period.

If you would like to sign up, send a detailed message to the DNR sturgeon guard coordinator at the DNR Oshkosh Service Center at sturgeon@dnr.state.wi.us or call 920-303-5444. Your call will be returned to schedule a day or night next spring that is convenient for you. If possible, make it a family outing by bringing a son or daughter or your spouse. For many it has become a family tradition.

Sturgeon for Tomorrow

In 1977 a group of sturgeon enthusiasts from Lake Winnebago founded Sturgeon for Tomorrow to help preserve, protect and enhance the sturgeon resource of the lake system. That group quickly grew into the largest citizen advocacy group for sturgeon in the world, currently made up of four chapters and over 3,000 members. Through tremendous dedication and hard work Sturgeon for Tomorrow (SFT) has raised and donated to date over \$600,000 for sturgeon research and management since its inception. SFT has funded a wide variety of projects over the years including the sturgeon guard program, the Sturgeon History Project, purchase of sampling equipment, spawning and

nursery site construction, sturgeon population assessments, sturgeon propagation and the Upper Fox River sturgeon rehabilitation project. SFT also provided the support necessary to ensure the enactment of the \$1,500 fine for possession of an illegal sturgeon, and actively participates in Winnebago and statewide sturgeon management advisory committees.

If you are interested in further information about Sturgeon for Tomorrow or are interested in attending one of their four fund raising banquets held each winter, please call:

David Vogds	SFT Main Chapter President (East Shore) Banquet January 26, 2008 in Kiel	920-921-3701
Jim Patt	SFT Southwest Chapter President (Fond du Lac) Banquet January 12, 2008 in Fond du Lac	920-922-7136
Dick Braasch	SFT West Central Chapter President (Oshkosh-West Shore) Banquet March 15, 2008 in Oshkosh	920-231-4708
Wayne Hoelzel	SFT Northern Half Chapter President (North Shore) Banquet February 2, 2008 in Darboy	920-725-1206
Matt Woods	Upper Lakes Chapter Banquet September 13, 2008 at Hahn's Resort, Orihula	920-582-0113

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